

**In courage
and unity,
is hope.**

2025 - 2028

Stonewall

Vision

Our vision is of a world where everyone, everywhere has equal rights.

We will work until every person who is Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Trans, Queer + is living free from discrimination, prejudice and inequality, making our shared future safer, fairer and more prosperous.

Introduction

Stonewall was founded in 1989. It was envisaged with courage, unity and hope, established as an advocacy organisation that would complement the work of other movements campaigning for equal rights. Originally, Stonewall's goal was the repeal of Section 28, subsequently creating a legislative and policy agenda that was extremely successful and changed the landscape for LGB (and later on T) people and those who support them in the UK. Legislative successes have meant that LGBTQ+ people can now, amongst other things, expect to see themselves reflected in school sex and relationships education, get married; serve in the military; access fertility treatment and adopt, as well as be protected from discrimination under the law.



There is a place for a new organisation to research on issues of relevance on a professional basis. Such an organisation should not attempt to be a substitute for other organisations campaigning for the rights of LGBTQ+ people in Britain, it should not purport to be the representative of, nor provide leadership for, the LGBTQ+ community. It will be a pragmatic organisation, pursuing a set of specific aims; an executive committee to determine policy and a professional secretariat

The original founding charter of Stonewall known as The Second Limehouse Convention, 11th September 1988. Now, on display in the Queer Museum of Britain.

Overview of the strategy



In an environment increasingly marked by fear, hostility, and prejudice towards LGBTQ+ people, Stonewall stands as a beacon of hope and a guiding force in the relentless pursuit of equality. As I reflect on my life experience and the history of Stonewall, I am inspired by the resilience and strength I have witnessed within our communities.

In courage and unity, is hope, sets out our strategic focus which centres on three primary aims: navigating turbulence, shaping policy and legislation and fostering inclusive places.

This strategic focus is reflective of the fact that we currently find ourselves in a climate reminiscent of the early battles for LGBTQ+ rights, and where hard-won advancements are threatened on a global scale. I draw upon my personal experience as a former army officer who served during a time when being LGBTQ+ in the military was criminalised. I witnessed firsthand the profound impact of discrimination and inequality, which forced me to navigate a life where I couldn't be myself.

Today, many of the barriers I once faced in the armed services have been dismantled, and reparations are in progress for those who suffered. Historical context should help empower us to navigate current adversities with courage and resilience.

Stonewall's unique history equips us to play an essential role in shaping policies that promote LGBTQ+ equality. I reflect often on the significant impacts of our founders - whose vision established Stonewall as a powerful campaigning organisation to combat injustices like Section 28. Our advocacy work is grounded in the same principles of courage, conversation, and hope.

The importance of creating inclusive environments cannot be overstated, particularly during tumultuous times. Stonewall's own story tells us that diversity in perspectives is vital for meaningful progress. We recognise that LGBTQ+ equality is a shared North Star. By fostering environments where everybody feels valued and supported, we make strides towards a more inclusive society.

Stonewall will remain steadfast in its mission to navigate the turbulence of the present day, shape informed and inclusive policies and cultivate places where everyone can work, live, and play freely.

As I've learned from experience, transformation is possible, but it demands courage, unity, and a shared belief in something better. It takes all of us: communities, allies, and partners across the public, private, and voluntary sectors. When we stand together, we become more than resilient we become hopeful. And with that hope, we move forward.

Catherine Dixon
Chair

Welcome by the Chief Executive



As we head towards our 40th birthday, there is still so much to be done to ensure that all Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Trans and Queer (LGBTQ+) people have the same rights as others; that there is true equality under the law; that there is social justice; that health access is equitable and that our shared places are inclusive.

We can no longer assume that our rights are safe, and that progress is inevitable and so, we once again need Stonewall ensuring the voices and experiences of our diverse LGBTQ+ community are at the centre of political conversations, in boardrooms and in the corridors of power.

Stonewall has always been a beacon of hope. When I was 15, I took courage from the commitment of its founders - and early supporters - who courageously stood up and said LGBTQ+ people deserve equal treatment under the law and in wider society. I like so many, have benefitted enormously from the changes created by Stonewall and others over the past 35 years. Stonewall is important to me personally because it has created so much positive social change. I applied to be the new CEO because we must continue to be a beacon of hope and progress. Our work must continue until everybody feels they can live safely, freely and openly without fear of prejudice or discrimination.

And let us be in no doubt, that despite progress we are a long way from equality being a reality. Too many LGBTQ+ people are still bullied in school, feel forced to mask their identity at work, or go without the healthcare they need, and face higher risks to their mental health. Even in later life, some LGBTQ+ older people are pushed back into silence — hiding who they are, all over again. It is against that backdrop that we unite in pursuit of equality, freedom and joy for all LGBTQ+ people.

Throughout history, we have seen people argue that enhancing rights for some, diminishes the rights of others. I do not believe that to be true. Although not easy to achieve or possible without compromise, enhancing the rights of everyone should not be seen as a zero-sum game. As we look to the future, we need to ensure we have a comprehensive legislative framework that ensures every single member of the LGBTQ+ community is afforded equal protection and treatment under the law.

The UK used to be a world leader in LGBTQ+ rights, but that is no longer the case. We hope that it will be again one day soon. We at Stonewall will strive to work collaboratively, forming alliances with those who share a common belief in humanity and equality and work tirelessly to create an equitable, safe, fair and thriving society which will ultimately benefit everyone.

Simon Blake, OBE
Chief Executive Officer

Our Purpose

We are Stonewall: we are working to make the world a safe and equal place for LGBTQ+ people to live, work and thrive.



We belong to various political parties, and none. But we unite in the sense of alarm at the atmosphere. An atmosphere in which the incidence of violence against LGBTQ+ people is increasing. We are worried that an unthinking intolerance is being more confidently expressed, in some quarters. And we fear that others in all the surrounding circumstances are seeing a signal for renewed hatred. For our part, we affirm our belief in fairness, courtesy toward people of every type; and tolerance of the difference between them. In general, we wish to warn against the climate of persecution.

A Sense of Alarm: A newspaper advert published by 280 leading public figures from all walks of life, ahead of the UK, House of Lords debate on Section 28, 1st February 1988. Nearly 40 years on, this could be published today.

Our Values

Stonewall is a diverse and inclusive organisation, underpinned by values that have helped us achieve decades of life changing impact for LGBTQ+ people. Our work has only been possible because of the partners, supporters, clients and community that have stood together and who share these values.

COURAGEOUS

We pursue progress with courage. We know we will not always please everyone but we are bold in the strategies and tactics that we believe will effect change for LGBTQ+ people.

COLLABORATIVE

We believe in working together. We convene diverse conversations; alliances and views with a wide range of partners in the pursuit of equal LGBTQ+ rights.

DIVERSE

We practice the diversity we preach. Diversity of thought, identity, experience and activism enables us to achieve more impactful outcomes for LGBTQ+ people.

FOCUSED

We cannot, and must not, try to do everything. We support, signpost to, and amplify the work of others.

PRAGMATIC

We are pragmatic. All of our choices are made through the lens of what will ultimately achieve a positive impact for LGBTQ+ rights.

SERVICE

We hold ourselves to high standards. We believe personal and collective accountability is essential; and strive to serve clients, partners and stakeholders effectively.

Our Strategic Objectives 2025 - 2028

- ➡ Provide leadership to *navigate turbulence* for LGBTQ+ issues and; work in coalition to protect and improve LGBTQ+ rights across the four UK nations and beyond.
- ➡ *Shape a policy and legislative agenda*, through working in partnerships, that is focused on improving LGBTQ+ lives day in, day out using data and evidence
- ➡ Support the development of safe and *inclusive places* where everyone can work, play and succeed throughout their lives.



Navigating Turbulence

We will provide leadership to navigate turbulence and; work in coalition to protect and improve LGBTQ+ rights across the UK nations and beyond.

Times have always been turbulent for the LGBTQ+ community; and many different strategies have been adapted to navigate them. Globally we are in the midst of a cultural backlash and moral panic. It is a time of regressive laws, curtailing freedoms and the rise of populist movements. We are reminded yet again that hard won rights are not always secure. We are undoubtedly in another period of turbulence.

We will:

- ➡ Forge and strengthen coalitions: actively engage in building dynamic coalitions within the global LGBTQ+ movement and with partners in the public and private sector, civil society and parliamentarians to stand firm in the face of regressive policies and actions that impact LGBTQ+ people and other marginalised communities.
- ➡ Empower through education and support: Convene, develop and support impactful programmes that educate, empower and inspire individuals, organisations and leaders to advocate for equal LGBTQ+ rights.
- ➡ Use data, evidence and real-life stories as the foundation for advocacy: creating compelling narratives to highlight the urgent need for equality and justice for our diverse LGBTQ+ communities.



During the darkest days of the AIDS crisis, we buried our friends in the morning, we protested in the afternoon and we danced all night. The dance kept us in the fight because it was the dance we were fighting for. It didn't look like we were going to win then and we did. It doesn't feel like we are going to win now, but we could. Keep fighting, keep dancing

DAN SAVAGE, 2024

Shaping Policy

We will shape a policy and legislative agenda, through working in partnerships, that is focused on improving LGBTQ+ lives day in, day out using data and evidence.

Sustainable and long-term change is created through a mix of societal change and legislative action; and cannot be achieved alone. Over the decades, Stonewall has equipped politicians with the reasons to deliver change, even when they didn't instinctively see the need. We will seek common ground and consensus. Together we must educate, motivate, and inspire lawmakers to support equality, and continue shaping the legislative and policy landscape to improve the lives of LGBTQ+ people.

We will:

-  Improve the laws and policies which impact on LGBTQ+ people by using data and evidence to support parliamentarians and lawmakers to introduce, champion and drive effective legislation which enhance the lives of LGBTQ+ people.
-  Undertake research with partners to inform our priorities and elevate the voices and needs of all members of our vibrant communities.
-  Convene and mobilise, working with others across civil society, the public sector and business communities to effectively advocate for equality and LGBTQ+ rights with policymakers and legislators.



You never completely have your rights, one person, until you all have your rights




MARSHA P. JOHNSON

Inclusive Places

We will support the development of safe and inclusive places where everyone can work, play and succeed throughout their lives

LGBTQ+ people are in the same places as everybody else. Together we need to ensure that they are equally safe, protected and heard. Our programmatic and campaigning work - with businesses, organisations, institutions and; public and cultural bodies - is driven by the knowledge that all LGBTQ+ people deserve to live, work and play in environments where they can succeed.

We will:

-  Design data and evidence led programs that help create inclusive environments for LGBTQ+ people and support workplaces who want to create high performing and inclusive cultures that attract, retain and develop LGBTQ+ people
-  Implement creative campaigns designed to create safer and more equitable environments for LGBTQ+ people through enhancing public awareness and support.
-  Forge strategic collaborations with organisations, institutions and partners to design and advocate inclusive policy change using data, evidence and research.



We have to be visible. We are not ashamed of who we are

SYLVIA RIVERA

Who We Are

Stonewall is part of a vibrant, growing and global movement advocating for LGBTQ+ rights.

Over the last 35+ years, we have helped create transformative change in the lives of LGBTQ+ people in the UK. Our work has driven positive change in public attitudes and public policy and there are now over 3000 LGBTQ+ organisations across the UK.

We deliver campaigns, programmes, and policy work that is focussed on achieving deep, sustainable change, through convening, collaboration, and conversation.

We support parliamentarians and lawmakers; design policies and campaigns and deliver programmes and services which focus on achieving equal rights for LGBTQ+ people.

Globally, we face increasing opposition to the belief that everyone deserves equal rights. It is more important than ever that we stand firm and advocate for what we know to be true: Everyone, everywhere, deserves equal rights.



How We Work

Stonewall's approach will be rooted in our heritage. In 1989 Stonewall chose to be in the room and at the table with those who had the influence to bring about meaningful positive change for LGBTQ+ people. Today, our approach is no different.

Over the decades, we learned that sustainable change is about effective influence – providing hope and winning hearts and minds. We learnt that gaining influence requires participation; effective participation requires pragmatism, and pragmatism requires the ability to work on issues and find common cause with diverse groups.

Only constructive dialogue informed by good quality data and evidence, widespread alliances, and pragmatism can ultimately deliver full equality for LGBTQ+ people.

LGBTQ+ people are in the same places as everybody else; and Stonewall will work to ensure that they are equally safe, protected and heard. Our programmatic work across schools, workplaces and inclusion in sport has been driven by a belief that all LGBTQ+ people deserve to live, work and play in environments where they can thrive, the same as everyone else.

Since its founding in 1989, Stonewall has been both a convenor - with a role finding common ground and consensus in a world that is increasingly divided - and a leader supporting workplaces, schools, religious and sports institutions and others on approaches to LGBTQ+ inclusion.

Stonewall's history of convening, collaborating and leading has enabled us to create deep lasting, legal and cultural change over the past 35+ years. We renew our commitment to this approach as we embark on this new strategy.

A central role in delivering change since 1989

Over the past 35+ years, Stonewall has primarily focused its activity in two key domains - influencing legislation and policy, and creating change through programming and leadership development. Over those 35+ years, the communities we serve has changed. From 1989 - 2015 Stonewall was a LGB charity. In 2015 we became a LGBTQ+ charity, committed to trans inclusion.

Stonewall has played a very significant and important role in changing the law to improve the lives of LGBTQ+ people. This includes:

THE REPEAL OF SECTION 28:

We were founded in direct response to Section 28, the homophobic legislation that prevented young people learning about homosexuality in schools. It took twelve years in Scotland and 14 years in England and Wales to overturn this law.

EQUALISING THE AGE OF CONSENT:

The Sexual Offences Amendment Act (2001) lowered the age of consent for gay and bi men to 16, aligning the age of consent with heterosexuals. After 35 years of inequality, this was a huge victory.

LIFTING THE BAN ON MILITARY SERVICE:

Until 2000, LGBTQ+ people were banned from the British military, often dismissed or stripped of medals. Stonewall campaigned to end this discrimination, leading to the ban's repeal in 2000. In 2025, a compensation framework was finally agreed for those affected.

THE RIGHT FOR LGBTQ+ COUPLES TO ADOPT:

The Adoption and Children Act came into effect in 2002 and allowed unmarried couples, including LGBTQ+ couples, to apply for joint adoption.

MARRIAGE EQUALITY:

The Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 made history by legalising same-sex marriage in England and Wales. Scotland joined the movement in 2014, but Ireland didn't achieve marriage equality until 2020. These changes were landmark victories for LGBTQ+ rights, and they represented more than just the right to marry - it was about recognition, dignity, and equality.

These have been milestone victories, but there is still more to do - we won't rest until we live in a society which is free from discrimination, prejudice and inequality for LGBTQ+ people.



Hope will never be silent

HARVEY MILK



To learn more about our work, visit our website:
<https://www.stonewall.org.uk>

To follow our regular updates, follow us on social media.

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